

## CHECKLIST ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

<b>Project Name:</b>	Ruby River Properties LLC Stockwater Tank Installation
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b>	August, 2012
<b>Proponent:</b>	Ruby River Properties LLC
<b>Location:</b>	Section 36, Township 8 South – Range 5 West
<b>County:</b>	Madison County

### I. TYPE AND PURPOSE OF ACTION

Proponent would like to install an underground pipeline (approximately 250 yards) and stock water tank to water livestock on state ground in Section 36, T 8 S – R 5 W. The water source would be an existing underground pipeline which is part of the Kelly Springs stock pipeline project that was completed in 2001. A new underground pipeline will tap into the existing Kelly Springs line and will allow for the installation of a new stock tank.

### II. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

#### 1. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT, AGENCIES, GROUPS OR INDIVIDUALS CONTACTED:

*Provide a brief chronology of the scoping and ongoing involvement for this project.*

FWP Wildlife Biologist, Bob Brannon  
DNRC Archeologist, Patrick Rennie  
MT Natural Heritage Program

#### 2. OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION, LIST OF PERMITS NEEDED:

No other permits are needed for this project.

#### 3. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:

**Action Alternative:** Allow the proponent to tap into the existing Kelly Springs pipeline and install an underground pipeline to feed a stock water tank on state land.

**No Action Alternative:** Deny proponent permission to tap into the existing Kelly Springs pipeline and install an underground pipeline to feed a stock water tank on state land.

### III. IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- *RESOURCES potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.*
- *Explain POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS following each resource heading.*
- *Enter "NONE" If no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.*

#### **4. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE:**

*Consider the presence of fragile, compactable or unstable soils. Identify unusual geologic features. Specify any special reclamation considerations. Identify any cumulative impacts to soils.*

There are no fragile, compactable, or unstable soils or unusual geologic features associated with this proposal. The proposed project involves the use of a vibra-shank to install the pipeline at a depth of approximately 18 inches. The proposed project would not cause increased erosion on the site.

#### **5. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION:**

*Identify important surface or groundwater resources. Consider the potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality. Identify cumulative effects to water resources.*

No important surface water resources are located in the proposed project area.

#### **6. AIR QUALITY:**

*What pollutants or particulate would be produced? Identify air quality regulations or zones (e.g. Class I air shed) the project would influence. Identify cumulative effects to air quality.*

There will be no air quality issues associated with this proposal. The location is an isolated site away from populated areas. Construction should take about three days. Some dust will be generated during the construction of this project; however no long term or cumulative impacts are anticipated.

#### **7. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY:**

*What changes would the action cause to vegetative communities? Consider rare plants or cover types that would be affected. Identify cumulative effects to vegetation.*

An NRIS search did not identify any sensitive plant species or cover types.

#### **8. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS:**

*Consider substantial habitat values and use of the area by wildlife, birds or fish. Identify cumulative effects to fish and wildlife.*

The installation of the stock water tank will not affect the use of the area by terrestrial, avian life. Installation of the underground pipeline and stock tank will be of short duration and overall disturbance of terrestrial, avian, and aquatic life will be minimal. No direct, indirect or cumulative effects to terrestrial, avian and aquatic life and habitats are foreseen from this proposal.

#### **9. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES:**

*Consider any federally listed threatened or endangered species or habitat identified in the project area. Determine effects to wetlands. Consider Sensitive Species or Species of special concern. Identify cumulative effects to these species and their habitat.*

The Montana Natural Heritage program was contacted regarding species of concern within the project area. The search identified the following species of concern; Greater Sage Grouse, Blacktailed Jack Rabbit, Sage Thrasher, and Brewers Sparrow,

**Greater Sage-grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*)** Greater sage Grouse use has been recorded near the project area. The DNRC is not aware of any important breeding leks in the vicinity. If sage-grouse are using the tract, they could be directly disturbed and displaced by activities associated with this project; however, the

disturbance would be short term and would not be expected to have a measureable impact on sage –grouse habitat. Measurable direct, indirect, or cumulative effects would not be anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

**Blacktailed Jack Rabbit (*Lepus californicus*)** Blacktailed Jack Rabbit is listed as a Montana State sensitive species. The rabbit could be displaced during the construction phase of this project which will be of short duration. The overall habitat for blacktailed jack rabbits in the project area however should not be affected by this project. No long term or cumulative impacts to the rabbit are anticipated.

**Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*)** Sage Thrasher is listed as a sensitive species by the Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service and BLM. It is sagebrush dependent species. The overall footprint of this project is quite small. The pipeline will be underground and the stock tank will impact only a small area. The overall impact to the sage thrasher will be small with the most occurring during the construction phase of the project. No long term or cumulative impacts are anticipate to the sage thrasher from this proposal.

**Brewers Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*)** Brewers Sparrow is a BLM sensitive species. Per Montana Natural Resource Information Service (NRIS), the species prefers nesting in sagebrush averaging 16 inches in height. The proposed project would not significantly alter the current vegetative community or lead to any long term or cumulative impacts to Brewer's sparrow populations in the area.

#### **10. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES:**

*Identify and determine effects to historical, archaeological or paleontological resources.*

MT DNRC Archeologist Patrick Rennie was contacted and there are no known archeological sites associated with this proposal.

#### **11. AESTHETICS:**

*Determine if the project is located on a prominent topographic feature, or may be visible from populated or scenic areas. What level of noise, light or visual change would be produced? Identify cumulative effects to aesthetics.*

The project is located in an isolated area away from public view. The area receives the most traffic during the big game hunting season and will not be visible from the only public road in the area. The project will not have a significant impact to the aesthetics. The main activity in this area is cattle grazing and a new spring development will not impact the overall character of the landscape.

#### **12. DEMANDS ON ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES OF LAND, WATER, AIR OR ENERGY:**

*Determine the amount of limited resources the project would require. Identify other activities nearby that the project would affect. Identify cumulative effects to environmental resources.*

Demands on environmental resources will be minimal. The DNRC Dillon Unit is unaware of any planned or future projects planned for the area.

#### **13. OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS PERTINENT TO THE AREA:**

*List other studies, plans or projects on this tract. Determine cumulative impacts likely to occur as a result of current private, state or federal actions in the analysis area, and from future proposed state actions in the analysis area that are under MEPA review (scoped) or permitting review by any state agency.*

Scoping for this project didn't identify any known other projects under MEPA review at this time.

#### IV. IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN POPULATION

- *RESOURCES* potentially impacted are listed on the form, followed by common issues that would be considered.
- Explain *POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS* following each resource heading.
- Enter "NONE" if no impacts are identified or the resource is not present.

##### 14. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY:

*Identify any health and safety risks posed by the project.*

No long term or cumulative impacts to human health and safety were identified from this proposal.

##### 15. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURE ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION:

*Identify how the project would add to or alter these activities.*

The installation of an, underground pipeline, and stock tank could benefit the grazing on this state section and help provide for long term proper management of this section by distributing livestock over the section.

##### 16. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT:

*Estimate the number of jobs the project would create, move or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to the employment market.*

The proposal if approved would provide a contractor in the area with a few days work. Employment opportunities from this proposal will not have any effect on long term employment in the area.

##### 7. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES:

*Estimate tax revenue the project would create or eliminate. Identify cumulative effects to taxes and revenue.*

The project if approved would not provide any increase in tax revenue to the county or state.

##### 18. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES:

*Estimate increases in traffic and changes to traffic patterns. What changes would be needed to fire protection, police, schools, etc.? Identify cumulative effects of this and other projects on government services.*

There would be no increase in demand for government services if this project was approved.

##### 19. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS:

*List State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, and other zoning or management plans, and identify how they would affect this project.*

No zoning or management plans were identified during the scoping for this project.

##### 20. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES:

*Identify any wilderness or recreational areas nearby or access routes through this tract. Determine the effects of the project on recreational potential within the tract. Identify cumulative effects to recreational and wilderness activities.*

This proposal would have no long term or cumulative impacts to recreation in the area.

**21. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING:**

*Estimate population changes and additional housing the project would require. Identify cumulative effects to population and housing.*

This proposal will not impact current density and distribution of population and housing.

**22. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES:**

*Identify potential disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities.*

This proposal is compatible with the current use of the land which is cattle grazing. There would be no long term or cumulative impacts to social structures and mores if this project was approved.

**23. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY:**

*How would the action affect any unique quality of the area?*

The project is located in an isolated area away from public view. The area receives the most traffic during the big game hunting season. The project will not have a significant impact to the aesthetics. The main activity in this area is cattle grazing and a new stock tank will not impact the overall character of the landscape.

**24. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:**

*Estimate the return to the trust. Include appropriate economic analysis. Identify potential future uses for the analysis area other than existing management. Identify cumulative economic and social effects likely to occur as a result of the proposed action.*

This project if approved would be listed as an improvement on the lessee's lease.

<b>EA Checklist Prepared By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Timothy Egan	<b>Date:</b> 7/23/12
	<b>Title:</b> Dillon Unit Manager	

## V. FINDING

### 25. ALTERNATIVE SELECTED:

Authorize improvement request to install pipeline and stock tank

### 26. SIGNIFICANCE OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS:

Significant impacts will not occur as a result of the proposed action. There are no unique resources or values associated with the project area. The stock tank development will improve livestock distribution and reduce impacts to soil and water resources.

### 27. NEED FOR FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:

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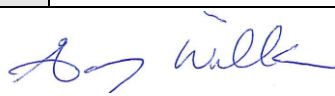
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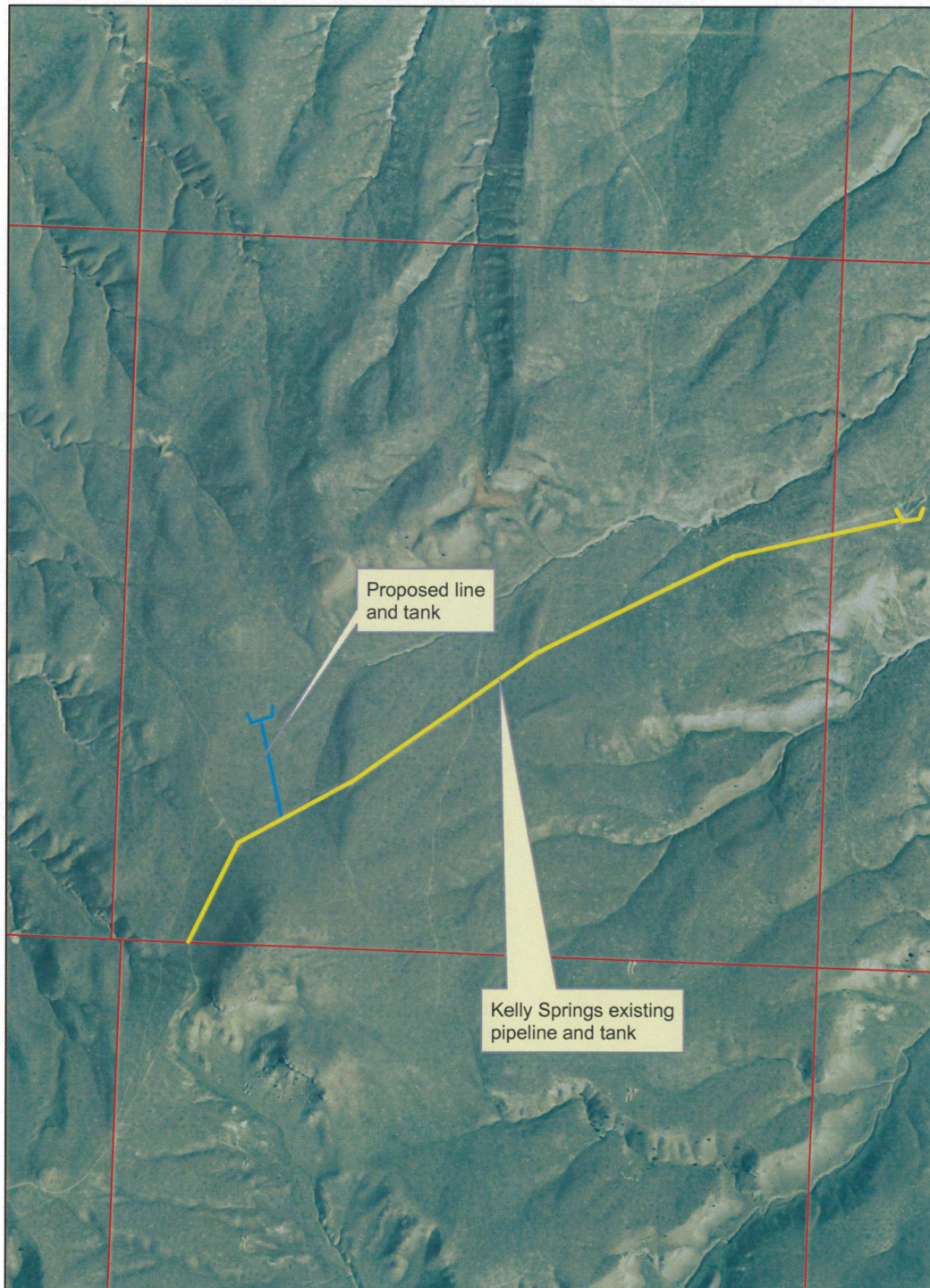
More Detailed EA

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No Further Analysis

<b>EA Checklist Approved By:</b>	<b>Name:</b> Garry Williams
	<b>Title:</b> Area Manager, Central Land Office
<b>Signature:</b> 	<b>Date:</b> 7/25/2012

## T8S R5W Section 36



1 inch = 1,056 feet

